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Application No: 10/556,122
Amendment B
Reply to Office Action Dated 12/11/2007

MAR 11 2008

Attorney Docket No: 3926.215

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are now pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-6 have been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. More specifically, the Examiner has stated that it is unclear from the limitation "the ring land (8) of the friction ring (4) exhibits slots (34) in a circumferential direction which point radially outwards and feature an end bore (36) on their outer end" how the slots are exhibited in a circumferential direction, how the slots point radially outwards, and how the end bores (36) are connected to the slots (34).

The language of claim 1 has been modified to even more clearly define the present invention. More specifically, claim 1 now clearly recites that the slots (34) are arranged circumferentially around the ring land (8) and run from an inside of the ring land (8) into the friction ring (4), and that the end bore (36) runs partially through the ring land (8) and through the friction ring (4).

The Examiner has stated that it appears that the end bores (36) are spaced radially and axially from the slots (34). However, it is noted that the end bore (36) is a continuation of the corresponding slot (34) at the outer end of the slot (see Fig. 1). The reason that the end bores (36) may appear to be disconnected with the slots (34) in Fig. 1 is that the support ring (18) is arranged on top of the ring land (8) (see Figs. 3-4).

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Warrallo (GB 1412758) in view of JP Patent Document JP 2002-48167 (hereinafter JP '167).

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Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Warrallo in view of JP '167 and further in view of Blunier (US 4,049,085).

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Warrallo in view of JP '167 and further in view of Burgoon et al. (US 2002/0157908).

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Warrallo in view of JP '167 and further in view of Bauer et al. (US 2002/0153214).

As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the end bore (36) runs partially through the ring land (8) and through the friction ring (4), and more specifically that a step is formed at a location where the ring land (8) is connected to the friction ring (4) since the friction ring (4) is thicker than the ring land (8), and the end bore (36) runs through the step. The technical effect of these limitations is that the forces due to thermal expansion of the friction ring are distributed between the ring land and the friction ring. The thicker friction ring shows much higher force than the thinner ring land. Without the end bores in the friction ring, the entire forces would act on the thinner and thus weaker ring land.

The Examiner has stated that Warrallo does not disclose that the ring land of the friction ring exhibits slots in a circumferential direction which point radially outwards and feature an end bore on their outer end. However, the Examiner has further stated that JP '167 discloses that the ring land of the friction ring exhibits slots (2) in a circumferential direction which point radially outwards and feature an end bore (3) on their outer end.

However, it is noted that in JP '167 the bores 3 are located entirely in the ring land, namely the bores 3 do not run partially through the ring land and through the friction ring and do not run through the step formed at a location where the ring land is connected to the friction ring as in the present invention.

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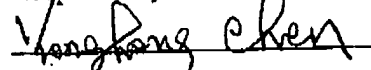
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Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the cited references and since claims 2-6 are dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Favorable consideration and early issuance of the Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. Should further issues remain prior to allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the indicated telephone number.

Date: March 11, 2008

Respectfully submitted,



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